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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 00231

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CXABU:
ACTION: AMB
INFO: DCM USLO DAO POL

DISSEMINATION: AMB
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: ASD:PRODMAN
DRAFTED: CGD:JDAVIS
CLEARED: AMB:MSISON

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INFO RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 000231

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/12/2015
TAGS: [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [MARR](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [IO](#) [TC](#)
SUBJECT: ASD RODMAN MEETS UAE MINDEF MOHAMMED BIN RASHID

Classified by Ambassador Michele J. Sison; Reason: 1.4 (B)
and (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: In a January 11 meeting with Dubai Crown Prince and UAE Minister of Defense Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid (MBR), ASD Rodman expressed USG appreciation for UAE's contributions to our counter-terror and counter-proliferation efforts. In response to a question on Iraq, ASD Rodman outlined the U.S. political and military strategy for achieving stability. MBR doubted that stability could be achieved as long as Sunnis were "sitting at home depressed"; a way needed to be found to give them hope. US mistakes had led to Iran playing an increased role in Iraq. MBR said the Palestinian elections had left him "pleased and hopeful."
End Summary

¶2. (C) On January 11 Peter Rodman, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs (ASD/ISA), visiting the UAE for the first annual Joint Military Commission meetings with the UAE military, called on the UAE

Defense Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum (MBR), the Crown Prince and de facto ruler of Dubai. ASD Rodman expressed condolences at the recent passing of UAE founder and President Sheikh Zayid, and congratulated MBR on the smooth transition. ASD Rodman noted that the JMC sessions were going well, a reflection of the healthy state of the UAE-USG relationship. MBR, noting that the UAE had been a partner "from day one" in the war on terror, said he thought Dubai and the UAE had probably provided the US with more information on the whereabouts of terrorists than any other country. Relations between the intell services of our two countries were increasing, and exchange of information was growing.

13. (C) How are things going in Iraq, MBR asked? Noting that it was a difficult period, ASD Rodman said the US had a combined military and political strategy. In parallel with our military efforts against the insurgents, we were supporting an Iraqi political process, reflected in the January 30 elections, because an elected government would have legitimacy. The insurgents feared this and were thus trying to disrupt the elections. Sunnis faced a painful dilemma, because whatever happened they would not play the same dominant role they had played in the past. Nevertheless they would play an important role in a benign political system. Polls showed that 85 percent of Iraqis wanted the elections to take place, including most Sunnis; the insurgents were using fear to prevent them from participating. Delaying the elections would not solve anything -- the Sunnis needed to come to terms with their situation, and delaying six months wouldn't change the reality. And the elections were not the end of the process -- Sunnis would be included in the new government and participate in drafting the new Constitution whatever the results of the elections. The Shia and Kurds were showing great wisdom in that respect.

14. (C) MBR said the lack of Sunni participation was not because they were afraid of the terrorists. They were a very strong group; if they disagreed with the terrorists they would kill them or drive them out of their midst immediately. The problem was that the U.S., and the Pentagon in particular had made mistakes. It had backed "the wrong man," Chalabi, and had erred in disbanding the army and forcing Baathists out. Teachers, doctors, engineers had been made jobless because they were Baathists. The Baath party was the backbone of the country, had held the country together. Anyone who wanted a decent job had needed to join the party.

15. (C) The void created by de-Baathification, MBR declared, had "given Iran the chance of a lifetime." It was simply not true that most Sunnis supported the election process; Sunnis, the backbone of the country, were sitting at home, depressed. It was essential to "get the right people back in their jobs; if elections were held now, with the Sunnis sitting at home depressed, the resistance would expand. The Sunnis knew they would never go back to having all the power themselves, but they needed to be given hope. The only way of getting rid of terrorists would be to get the Sunnis on board -- once that happened they would get rid of the terrorists themselves. But they had to be given their jobs back and given hope -- they would never accept being forced to sit at home (as former Baathists) while the Shia took all the power, thereby granting influence to Iran.

16. (C) ASD Rodman said that in our view the Shia of Iraq were very different from those in Iran. They were more moderate and secular, and clearly understood the need for unity in their country. They were showing great openness to Sunnis and Kurds, working together with them in the current government. The so-called Shia electoral list included many Sunnis, and the Shia clearly understood they would need to form coalitions after the elections. We did not believe the elections would lead to a radical Shia state. On the issue of de-Baathification, it was only supposed to have affected the very top levels of the Baath party, and we had been working for months to repair the implementation. As for the Iraqi army, we had not disbanded it; the great tragedy of the

army was that it had disintegrated on its own. ASD Rodman said he agreed fully that it was our job to get the Sunnis to help us defeat the extremists. We were training the Iraqi security forces quickly, and their performance was improving.

¶7. (C) ASD Rodman told MBR that we shared his perception of Iran as a strategic threat; it was safe to assume that no warming of the US-Iran relationship was in the works. We were worried about Iran's nuclear program, and very skeptical of the agreement with the Europeans because we believed the Iranians would cheat. If they cheated, we would need to find ways of imposing costs on them. ASD Rodman added that we shared MBR's earlier-stated view that it was a very positive moment in the Israeli-Palestinian situation. There was new leadership on the Palestinian side and a new coalition on the Israeli side. The Israeli government was now willing to negotiate its withdrawal from Gaza rather than making it unilateral, and there was a willingness to take the "historic step" of removing settlements. We would use our influence to help both sides make this disengagement work. We recognized that progress on the Palestinian track would make things easier for our friends in the region.

¶8. (C) MBR assured ASD Rodman that "we are doing our best to be partners, and we won't stop...there will always be bad people." The UAE approach was to "give our people a good life, to work hard for their benefit," so that there would be no reason for them to become terrorists. If they turned to terrorism anyway, then the UAE would not hesitate to "use arms against them."

¶9. (U) Meeting participants included:

U.S. - ASD Rodman and staff, Ambassador Sison, USLO Col. Simm, Dubai CG Davis

UAE - MBR, Mohammed Gergawi (economic advisor), Sultan bin Sulayam (Director, Dubai Port Authority), Shaikh Ahmed bin Sayeed al Maktoum (Emirates Group Chairman), and two of MBR's sons, Shaikh Rashid and Shaikh Hamdan.

¶10. (U) ASD Rodman has cleared this message. Congen Dubai drafted this cable.

¶11. (U) Baghdad) minimize considered.
SISON